



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
3170 EAST MAIN STREET
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
CANON CITY, CO
January 5, 2005

MINUTES

Group 1

Virginia Patton
Gene King
Charles Rech
Jim Coleman
Rick Thompson

Group 2

Kaaren K. Hardy
Donna Murphy
Josh Osterhoudt
Larry Strohl

Group 3

Keith McNew
Jim Bensberg
Michael Bush
Loren Whittemore

RAC Members not in attendance: Joseph Duda.

GUESTS: Doris Morgan, Senator Allard's Pueblo Office; SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society; Donnie Sparks; Dan Tekavec, Public Service Company of Colorado; James Bouknight, Canon City Daily Record; Tracy Harmon, Pueblo Chieftain and Kate Colby, KRLN Radio Station.

BLM/FS PERSONNEL: Roy Masinton, Ken Smith, Linda McGlothlen, Paul Crespin, Dave Walker, Pete Zwaneveld.

COUNCIL BUSINESS:

Roy asked the Council for comments on the RAC Handbook that was mailed to them. The general consensus was that it was well done and will be very useful.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

SeEtta Moss of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society commented about the Castles Gardens Southeast of Salida. It is a barren area that has a rare Buckwheat Plant that is only found in Chaffee County and Fremont County along the Gold Belt Byway. This area has been trashed by Mountain Bikes and other motorized use and should be closed to OHV use.

MANAGERS UPDATE:

No one from the BLM in the San Luis Valley was able to attend. Masinton read a statement from Jim Rhett on the San Luis Valley Travel Management Plan. "Mark Swinney and the ID Team are beginning the Analysis phase January 18 with the Consultant and should have it completed in February. Mark plans to contact [adjacent landowner,] Dennis [Crowther] and probably set up a travel management sub-group

meeting soon after to bring them up to speed with where the Plan is at that time and get their feed-back. There should be much more detail within each of the Draft Alternatives once the Analysis is complete.”

Paul Crispin, U.S. Forest Service, San Carlos District Ranger,:

Within this area the Forest Service is working on the Front Range Recreation Strategy. This is an attempt to have consistent rules and regulations among the Ranger Districts on the Front Range from Fort Collins to Trinidad. The Forest Service will be holding public meetings to help develop the strategy and identify what recreational activities should be encouraged at appropriate sites.

The planning rule to guide the Forest Plan Revision was unveiled before Christmas. The 2004 rule establishes direction for conserving species diversity. There are two levels, a broad forest wide level and a site specific level. Information about implementation will be in a set of new directives that are part of the Forest Service administrative policy and will be available for public comment.

Three Special Use Reservoir Permits have expired in the Salida Ranger District and they are deciding how to fund and do NEPA to get the permits back.

Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Manager:

The budget outlook for this year is bleak at this point. BLM has not received any significant increases in the last several years and has also absorbed Cost of living increases “in house” over the last 3 or 4 years. This has significantly reduced BLM’s budget and currently it is difficult to fund existing staff and fill vacancies. There has also been a decline in funding for the Fire Program. This funding normally goes into planning fuels projects. There was a decision made Bureau wide that this years fire funding would go into implementation and as a result some of the planning efforts were put on hold or not funded. The Field Office will have contracts to do fuels projects but won’t be doing any planning for next years projects and may need to cut back on our partnerships.

The Sipal Ranch exchange in the South Park area is progressing. This is very politically sensitive and as these land exchanges progress, typically they take a very long time. BLM hopes to consolidate and finish this exchange within the next 6 or 7 months.

Pete Zwaneveld commented the BLM is ready to begin the Environmental Analysis for the South Park Plan Amendment. He will update the Council further at the March RAC meeting.

The Board of the Gold Belt Byway, with funding from the Federal Highways Scenic Byways program and technical assistance from the National Park Service "Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance" program, is developing a plan to protect the Heritage Landscape along the Byway. Through the planning effort, significant agricultural, historic, aesthetic and natural landscapes and features along the Byway will be identified and prioritized for protection. They will be holding an Open House to provide an opportunity for community input and involvement.

The Open House is Saturday, January 29, 2005, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Four Mile Hall on High Park Road. Council members will be receiving an invitation.

Dave Walker, Arkansas River Travel Management Plan Update:

There were 288 individuals and organizations that provided input during the Comment Period. The Canon City meeting was attended by 76 people and 59 people attended the Salida meeting. Because most of the respondents expressed concerns and opinions that were shared by others, it was easily possible to segregate the respondents into seven distinctive types or groups of stakeholders. This was based on the primary interests and concerns contained in their letter. Those groups of stakeholders include: Environmental, Motorized Recreation, Non-motorized and Mechanized Recreation, Non-Recreation Uses, Affected Landowners, Government Agencies and Neutral Stakeholders.

There is a lot of bicycle interest and activity in the Salida area and a lot of trails going from private to U.S. Forest Service to BLM. Before BLM can consider those trails, there needs to be easements/rights-of-ways and this can be very complex.

Walker asked to meet briefly with the Arkansas River Travel Management subgroup after the meeting.

Rick Thompson and Dan Tekavec, Public Service Company of Colorado - Electricity Transmission in Colorado:

The power point presentation focused on generation, the various types of transmission lines and structures, substations and distribution. Some of the issues involved in providing power in Colorado include right-of-way/easements, Federal Master Permits and vegetation management. The BLM and transmission Companies work together on Right-of-Ways, and location of facilities involving public land.

LUNCH

Tim Carlson, Executive Director of the Tamarisk Coalition –Tamarisk in Colorado:

The Tamarisk Coalition is a non-profit organization that provides technical assistance, education and coordinating efforts for state and federal agencies, private organizations and landowners throughout the West. Tamarisk is a tenacious plant with a deep root system that can grow 100 feet deep and quickly take over riparian areas. In addition the leaf litter deposits a salt residue on the soil. In addition it provides poor habitat for wildlife and consumes large amounts of water. It is rapidly taking over riparian areas throughout the West. He discussed various methods of treatment and research that is being done.

Tom Grette, Royal Gorge Field Office Range Specialist:

The Royal Gorge Field Office has treated 150 acres on the public land over the past two years. They started with the smaller infestations in Badger Creek, McCoy Gulch, Volcano Gulch, along the Arkansas River, Grape Creek and Blue Heron.

Fremont County has done some aerial applications on private land. That may be the best way to go for treating dense stands. However, the dead wood still needs to be dealt with, even with aerial treatment.

The Council had passed a resolution on the Control of Noxious Weeds in Colorado at the March 18, 2004 meeting.

The next Front Range RAC meeting is March 2, 2005 at the Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Loren R. Whittemore Roy L. Masinton
Chair
Front Range Resource Advisory Council

Roy L. Masinton
Royal Gorge Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management